

## Developers, OMB

Gal July 14'17 A10

Ontario developers have once again mustered to try to prevent reform or replacement of the Ontario Municipal Board, by forming a new lobby group, Building TO Inc. (Ontario Builders Lobby Against Reform, July 11).

You report that Building TO spokesperson Stephen Diamond says the government needs to ensure that under the new system “municipalities don’t undermine the province’s goals to build denser, more transit-friendly communities by shutting down new development to please ratepayers.”

In 2009, Waterloo Region, now ranked as the fourth-fastest-growing municipality in Canada, undertook extensive public and institutional consultation to produce a meticulously researched new Official Plan that not only met but also exceeded provincial densification directives under the Places to Grow Act.

In that case, a consortium of 27 developers and land speculators launched an appeal to the OMB against densification.

The OMB sided with the developers’ proposal to sacrifice 12 times as much farmland (much of which the developers owned) to urban growth as the region would.

The decision resulted in a protracted conflict that included accusations of OMB bias and procedural irregularities, formal court appeals and an eventual capitulation by the region because of the spiralling legal costs, resulting in a five-year hiatus during which planning had to proceed under outdated guidelines.

I can only conclude that some mysterious hidden agenda leads our developers to such contradictory positions in these two cases.

Could it be money?

– Greg Michalenko, Waterloo, Ont.